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30 September 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: BGen Frank B. Horton III, USAF
C/NIC

FROM:

[Redacted]
Acting NIO for Africa

SUBJECT:

Thoughts on Role of the NIO and DDCI

*By to VC/NIC - let's discuss.
Mentor - Very thoughtful piece,
a very helpful. Thank you!
I'm still making sense of
all this my self - & then
will get a course in recent
of you all & of DDCI & ODCI -*

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1. In my view, much of the concern about the estimates process--both within the Agency and elsewhere in the Community--stems from the very rapid evolution of the NIC since 1980 that has left much of the Community wondering about the role of the NIOs. Mary Jo was quite right about the widely-held perception that NIOs were originally mandated to be honest brokers but have become, in the eyes of many, far more than that. What Mary Jo did not mention was that the NIO system was also originally developed to help make NIEs and the Agency's other products more policy relevant. In the early days of the NIOs, this responsibility was approached in fits and starts, and took on the character of individual NIOs and that of the DCI. Under Admiral Turner, substantive issues that bore directly on policy were approached more explicitly than in the past, but still fairly gingerly, particularly when there were significant disagreements. Usually, the NIO played honest broker, but often Turner himself would play that role, or at least hold open court. Needless to say, this *modus operandi* had considerable appeal in the DDI. It nurtured the deeply entrenched view that the Agency must be independent of policy considerations, and provided a fairly clearcut process for shepharding that "independent" view. (I should say that the appeal of the process has developed to some degree in retrospect; I certainly remember instances of concern over excessive policy influence.) *this piece has helped!*

2. Bob Gates has been pretty tough with the DDI in his demand that it become more policy relevant. I think he would readily admit that he wanted change quickly and had no interest in coddling us along. My colleagues in the wider community tell me that they too felt the reverberations abruptly. The dramatic differences between the Carter and Reagan Administrations made the changes all the more painful, and perhaps inevitably raised suspicions about politicization of the intelligence process. Bob, through his own representations and through an excellent course at OTE, has tried to reeducate Agency analysts; the thrust of his effort, as I see it, is to assure people that he wants independent views but they must address policy concerns. He believes we are often arrogant in our judgments and thus fail

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to see and consider wider possibilities; this arrogance--I suspect he reasons--comes from decades of believing we stand above the unclean world of politics and policy.

3. All this history and background does have a point. The NIC, as the producer of National Estimates and the most accessible link between Agency leadership and Agency cadre--is taking the heat from within the Agency and the Community generated by some six years of confusion and unhappiness over the evolving role of intelligence in the policy world. Frankly, I do not think the NIC has been very creative in dealing with the problem; we tend to fight fires and bear up, but not educate and accommodate.

4. I have a few suggestions that might help. NIOs must have a clearer appreciation of their role and their responsibilities to the Community, particularly on this issue of handling differences on NIEs. After a year of being back on the NIC, I gather from discussions in Staff Meetings that this is still quite hazy, and varies from NIO to NIO. Once we get this straight among ourselves, the rest of the Community and the DDI should be given a clearer picture.

5. If NIOs are not honest brokers as they once were, then the level of Community representation in the estimate process should be upgraded, particularly within CIA. GS-10s, 11s, and 12s cannot handle nor should they handle the very serious and worthwhile battles that go on in the national intelligence forum. Without the NIO to safeguard, more authoritative individuals must be at the table. I know from my DDI experience, Branch, Division, and Office chiefs do not get very involved in estimates unless there is fullscale war, and then their appearance in the process is often defensive. If NIOs are not going to be honest brokers, then an appropriate level of CIA leadership should represent CIA views and should bring to the table the policy perspective that young analysts so often lack. INR, and to a lesser extent DIA, is also guilty of inattention to the process of creating estimates. Much of the grumbling about politicization of NIEs and failure to get a fair hearing begins when individuals, who do not have the confidence or sophistication to argue their institution's viewpoint, try to march through coordination. Nor can such individuals bring to the table the policy perspective that could make the NIE truly valuable in policymaking support.

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